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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5486

INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 001146

SIPDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/05/2018

TAGS: PREL PHUM KPKO UNSC SO

SUBJECT: SOMALIA: PKO POSSIBLE; MORE WORK NEEDED

REF: A. STATE 127595

¶B. USUN 1106

Classified By: Amb. Alejandro Wolff, for reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 7.

¶2. (C/NF) Summary: In response to reftel A instructions, USUN consulted with the UK and other interested delegations on December 4 and 5 on the possibility of quickly rehating the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) as a UN peacekeeping operation (PKO). The UK has resisted giving a firm response to our approach pending the outcome of a planned high-level video conference between Washington and London on Monday, December 8. This conference will be a key opportunity to persuade the UK to acquiesce to our approach. Consultations with other key delegations indicated substantial support for strengthening AMISOM, but the mandate of our proposed force will need to be refined and more information provided before members will be willing to agree to rehat AMISOM as a PKO. End Summary.

¶3. (C/NF) Acting on reftel A instructions, USUN approached the UK mission to the UN at the Ambassadorial and expert level on December 4 to ask the UK to join us in tabling a resolution to rehat AMISOM as a UN PKO. (NOTE: The UK mission was already aware of our resolution, as earlier the same morning a Department representative had incorrectly told a EU27 breakfast briefing in Washington that we would formally circulate a resolution immediately. End note.) Our approach centered on gaining British buy-in for the core issue of immediate rehating though we also briefed the UK on other key elements of our approach, such as an increased coordinating role for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG).

¶4. (C/NF) The UK was hesitant to offer an immediate response to our proposal but our contacts tell us that London believes the Brahimi Panel's criteria are far from being met in Somalia and that London will need "massive convincing." They propose to discuss this issue with the Department in a high-level video conference on Monday, December 8 and have told us that they will not circulate their draft PRST pending the outcome of this meeting. They have asked that we also refrain from formally circulating a draft resolution until after Monday's meeting.

¶5. (C/NF) In accordance with reftel A instructions, we also approached a number of key like-minded delegations in order to build support for our rehating approach. China, Libya, South Africa and Italy offered strong support for strengthening AMISOM and enhancing the international presence in Somalia. Uganda, though not a Council member until January, greeted our proposal warmly and offered to share its experience as an AMISOM troop contributing nation with other delegations. Panama, Indonesia, Vietnam and Burkina Faso offered more reserved support and cited the need to confer with capitals. All of the delegations we approached had questions on the mandate of our proposed peacekeeping force

and wanted to ensure that any mission authorized by the Council was underpinned by thorough analysis, with many citing the need for a detailed concept of operations (CONOPS).

¶6. (C/NF) Separately, the Russians confirmed to us at expert and Ambassadorial levels that they have moderated their previously hard-line stance against a PKO (reftel B) and that Russia was now prepared to "engage constructively" in discussions on a PKO for Somalia provided the force was given a limited scope and clear tasks. France was less forward-leaning, but French experts have told us informally that Paris might be convinced to accept a PKO if it were limited to a performing a few clear tasks within Mogadishu.

Comment and action request:

¶7. (C/NF) In order to obtain the best chance of success at quickly passing a PKO resolution in the Council:

a) We propose that the mandate envisioned in reftel A be revised to limit the proposed force to the city of Mogadishu focusing on two key objectives: 1) securing the port of Mogadishu in order to facilitate humanitarian aid delivery and 2) securing the airport and key venues in Mogadishu in order to facilitate a continued political process. The mandate foreseen in reftel A focuses on south-central Somalia and includes tasks such as training TFG forces. This broader mandate was questioned by many of the delegations we approached because it demands resources that even a rehatted AMISOM will not possess and is seen as opening the door to mission creep. A geographically- and functionally-limited

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mandate will make skeptical Council members more likely to approve a draft resolution by reassuring them that what they see is what they will get.

b) We request that the Department share details of its planning with us in order to allow us to make our case more effectively in responding to other members' legitimate questions. Specifically, we ask that the Department provide a CONOPS corresponding to reftel A's proposal for a force of 14,484 military personnel, 300 military observers, 175 staff officers and 1,200 police officers. Full details of the planning underpinning these proposals will allow us to respond effectively to the questions that even sympathetic Council members have posed about the provenance of these numbers. Without such details, our proposal will not be viewed as credible. A detailed concept of operations will also decrease our reliance on the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) for planning. DPKO has not been responsive to numerous Council requests to provide planning for a PKO for Somalia: by relying on DPKO for a CONOPS for a rehatted AMISOM, reftel A elements give DPKO an opportunity to potentially block progress toward early deployment of a PKO.

c) Alternatively, we suggest that the reftel A elements be revised to build on AMISOM's current force ceiling and CONOPS as a foundation, subject to any necessary fine-tuning by the Council.

Wolff